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EXAMINER

BRUSCA, JOHN S

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1631

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PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 09/765,291	Applicant(s) GRAY ET AL.	
	Examiner John S. Brusca	Art Unit 1631	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 27 October 2009.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 127, 128, 130-134, 136-142 and 146-155 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 127, 128, 130-134, 136-142, and 146-155 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 22 January 2001 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

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DETAILED ACTION

1. The application has been reassigned to a new examiner.

Status of the Claims

2. Claims 127, 128, 130-134, 136-142, and 146-155 are pending.

Claims 127, 128, 130-134, 136-142, and 146-155 are rejected.

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

3. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after allowance or after an Office action under Ex Parte Quayle, 25 USPQ 74, 453 O.G. 213 (Comm'r Pat. 1935). Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, prosecution in this application has been reopened pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114.

Applicant's submission filed on 27 October 2009 has been entered.

Election/Restrictions

4. In view of the amendment filed 27 October 2009, claims 150 and 151 are **rejoined**, and new claims 152-155 will be examined because the claims require a set of two probes as originally elected.

Priority

5. This application discloses and claims only subject matter disclosed in prior Application No. 08/487,974 filed 07 June 1995 and names an inventor or inventors named in the prior

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application. Accordingly, this application may constitute a continuation or division. Because no restriction requirement was made in parent Application No. 08/487,974, and claims to both products and processes of use were examined in the parent application, the instant application, claiming products, was not filed as the result of a restriction requirement and is therefore not a divisional application. The instant application is a continuation of parent Application No. 08/487,974. The applicants are requested to correct the claimed relationship of the parent application in the first sentence of the instant application, or file an Information Disclosure Statement correcting the relationship to parent Application No. 08/487,974.

Drawings

6. Color photographs and color drawings are not accepted unless a petition filed under 37 CFR 1.84(a)(2) is granted. Any such petition must be accompanied by the appropriate fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(h), three sets of color drawings or color photographs, as appropriate, and, unless already present, an amendment to include the following language as the first paragraph of the brief description of the drawings section of the specification:

The patent or application file contains at least one drawing executed in color. Copies of this patent or patent application publication with color drawing(s) will be provided by the Office upon request and payment of the necessary fee.

Color photographs will be accepted if the conditions for accepting color drawings and black and white photographs have been satisfied. See 37 CFR 1.84(b)(2).

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Color drawings are referred to on pages 27-33 regarding figures 2A, 2B, 3, 5, 10, and 12. The applicants have not filed three sets of color drawings or the required petition, nor does the specification comprise the required statement noted above. The applicants should either delete the references to color in the drawings or amendment application file to conform with the requirements for color drawings.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claim 137 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 137 recites a chromosomal translocation that is t(9;22)(q11;q34). It is not clear whether the applicants intend to claim such a translocation or if the limitation contains a typographical error. The specification discusses the Philadelphia chromosome as having a (9;22)(q34;q11) translocation at page 14, line 24. For the purpose of examination, the claim has been assumed to contain a typographical error, and to be drawn to the Philadelphia chromosome translocation.

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Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

7. It is noted that although the claimed subject matter is a product comprising two polynucleotide probes, claims 132-134, 136-142, 146, 147, and 149 contain additional limitations that refer to intended hybridization targets of the claimed composition. It is not apparent that the intended use limitations affect the structure of the claimed compositions, and therefore such intended use limitations do not have patentable weight (see MPEP 2111.02 for a discussion of intended use limitations in claim preambles). Although the limitations of intended use are not in the preamble of the claims, the limitations of targets for use with the probes is equivalent to intended use limitations in preambles. However, to promote compact prosecution and because the claimed targets of the probes are obvious over the prior art, the following rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) include prior art references that show the probe targets in the claimed subject matter.

8. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various

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claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

9. Claims 127, 128, 130-134, 136, 139-141, 148, and 149 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bartram et al. (The EMBO Journal, Vol. 4, pages 683-686 (1985)) in view of Hopman et al. (Histochemistry Vol. 85 pages 1-4 (1986)) in view of Hariharan et al. (The Embo Journal Vol. 6, pages 115-119 (1987)) in view of Shtivelman et al. (Cell, Vol. 47, pages 277-284 (1986), cited in the Information Disclosure Statement filed 26 August 2002) in view of Lawrence et al. (Cell Vol. 52, pages 51-61 (1988)).

The claimed subject matter is a set of two probes with distinguishable labels, one of which hybridizes to an ABL side of a chromosome translocation comprising a fusion of ABL and BCR genes, with the other probe hybridizing to the BCR side of the fusion of ABL and BCR genes. The probes are capable of being detected by cytogenetic analysis. In some embodiments the probes comprise different fluorescent labels, the probes are capable of in situ hybridization, the probes are capable of hybridizing to interphase chromosomal DNA, or the probes are capable of appearing as doublets after hybridization. In some embodiments the probes are capable of hybridizing to translocations of chromosomes 9 and 22, or the cells are capable of hybridizing to a sample of human bone marrow or peripheral blood. In one embodiment the probes are capable of hybridizing to a Philadelphia chromosome.

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Bartram et al. shows that patients with chronic myelocytic leukemia generally have a Philadelphia chromosome featuring a rearranged ABL and BCR sequences. Bartram et al. shows on page 683, column 2 and in the methods section on pages 685-686 the use of bone marrow and peripheral blood samples from a human patient to analyze for translocations of chromosomes 9 and 22 at the ABL and BCR genes. The patient was determined to have a complex chromosomal translocation between chromosomes 9, 22, and 12 instead of the typical Philadelphia chromosome translocation. In situ hybridization to metaphase chromosomes was performed, as shown in figure 2 and Table 1. The probes used included ABL and BCR probes that hybridized to the translocated chromosomes. Details of the regions of the BCR and ABL genes used for the probes are shown on page 686. The probes were isotopically labeled with tritium and hybridized in separate assays.

Bartram et al. does not show double label fluorescence in situ hybridization using single copy probes, hybridization to interphase chromosomal DNA, two probes that appear as doublets, or hybridization to a Philadelphia chromosome.

Hopman et al. shows in the abstract and throughout double label fluorescence in situ hybridization. Metaphase and interphase sequences were hybridized with different probes fluorescently labeled with fluorescein (FITC) or Texas Red (TRITC). Details of the probe labeling procedure is shown on pages 1-2 and Figure 1. Human mouse hybrid cells were used for in situ hybridization, and total human DNA and mouse repetitive sequences were labeled and after in situ hybridization could be distinguished in both metaphase and interphase cells (Figure

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2a-f). The staining patterns include adjacent distinct spots of mouse sequences (Figure 2c).

Hopman et al. concludes on page 4 that:

Simultaneous non-radioactive double hybridization can be useful for several research fields. We are currently trying to determine whether our techniques could be used to study the three dimensional topography of two genes in interphase nuclei. In cytogenetics, these techniques may be applied for a high resolution detection of the relative position of two gene sequences in normal and abnormal karyotypes.

Hariharan et al. discusses on page 115 the correlation between chronic myeloid leukemia and the Philadelphia chromosome (a transposition between chromosomes 9 and 22). Hariharan et al. shows maps of the BCR gene, maps of the rearranged ABL-BCR fusion of the Philadelphia chromosome in figure 1 and the sequence of the BCR gene in Figure 2.

Shtivelman et al. discusses the correlation between chronic myeloid leukemia and the Philadelphia chromosome on page 277. Shtivelman et al. shows a map of the ABL gene and the sequence of the gene in figure 1.

Lawrence et al. shows a method of in situ hybridization that uses fluorescently labeled probes of single sequences for detection of either metaphase or interphase chromosomal DNA sequences. Epstein Barr virus probes from either single copy regions or repeated regions of the viral genome were prepared and fluorescently labeled after hybridization as shown on page 59. Close integration of two copies of the viral genome was localized to one chromosome in interphase cells by the appearance of two spots (figure 3, discussed on pages 55-56. Metaphase cells were also hybridized with repeated or single copy viral probes (figure 2). Lawrence concludes on page 57 that their method is useful for gene mapping by in situ hybridization, and that fluorescence labeling has the advantage of higher resolution than tritium labeled probes.

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It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the probes for analyzing ABL-BCR chromosomal junctions by in situ hybridization by use of double label fluorescent probes because Hopman et al. shows a method of double label fluorescent in situ hybridization that is useful for studying chromosomal sequences in metaphase and interphase cells, Hariharan et al. and Shtivelman et al. show the sequence of the BCR and ABL genes, respectively, and make obvious BCR and ABL probes of any desired portion of the genes to study Philadelphia chromosomes, and because Lawrence et al. shows that fluorescent probes may be used to detect single copy sequences in metaphase and interphase cells, and that fluorescent probes have advantages for in situ hybridization of higher resolution than the tritium labeled probes used by Bartram et al.

10. Claims 127, 132-134, 136-138, 146, and 147 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bartram et al. in view of Hopman et al. in view of Hariharan et al. in view of Shtivelman et al. in view of Lawrence et al. as applied to claims 127, 128, 130-134, 136, 139-141, 148, and 149 above, and further in view of Ribeiro et al.

The claimed subject matter is a set of two probes with distinguishable labels, one of which hybridizes to an ABL side of a chromosome translocation comprising a fusion of ABL and BCR genes, with the other probe hybridizing to the BCR side of the fusion of ABL and BCR genes. In some embodiments the probes hybridize to a Philadelphia chromosome with a t(9;22)(q34;q11) translocation, the chromosomal translocation correlates with acute lymphocytic leukemia or chronic myelogenous leukemia.

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Bartram et al. in view of Hopman et al. in view of Hariharan et al. in view of Shtivelman et al. in view of Lawrence et al. as applied to claims 127, 128, 130-134, 136, 139-141, 148, and 149 above do not show probes that hybridize to a Philadelphia chromosome with a t(9;22)(q34;q11) translocation, or that the chromosomal translocation correlates with acute lymphocytic leukemia (ALL) or chronic myelogenous leukemia (CLL).

Ribeiro et al. shows on page 948 that a Philadelphia chromosome has a t(9;22)(q34;q11) translocation. Ribeiro et al. shows on page 948 that the Philadelphia chromosome is considered to be a marker of CLL. Ribeiro et al. shows in the abstract and Table 1 18 patients that have both the Philadelphia chromosome and ALL.

It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to make probes for analyzing ABL-BCR junctions as shown in Bartram et al. in view of Hopman et al. in view of Hariharan et al. in view of Shtivelman et al. in view of Lawrence et al. as applied to claims 127, 128, 130-134, 136, 139-141, 148, and 149 above that would detect Philadelphia chromosomes with a t(9;22)(q34;q11) translocation because Ribeiro et al. shows that the Philadelphia chromosome correlated with CLL. It would have been further obvious to make probes for analyzing ABL-BCR junctions in cells from ALL patients because Ribeiro et al. also shows that some ALL patients have the Philadelphia chromosome.

11. Claims 127, 132, and 142 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bartram et al. in view of Hopman et al. in view of Hariharan et al. in view of Shtivelman et al. in view of Lawrence et al. as applied to claims 127, 128, 130-134, 136, 139-141, 148, and 149

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above, and further in view of Selden et al. (Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA Vol. 80, pages 7289-7292 (1983)).

The claimed subject matter is a set of two probes with distinguishable labels, one of which hybridizes to an ABL side of a chromosome translocation comprising a fusion of ABL and BCR genes, with the other probe hybridizing to the BCR side of the fusion of ABL and BCR genes. In some embodiments the probes hybridize to a chromosomal rearrangement of a cell line.

Bartram et al. in view of Hopman et al. in view of Hariharan et al. in view of Shtivelman et al. in view of Lawrence et al. as applied to claims 127, 128, 130-134, 136, 139-141, 148, and 149 above do not show probes that hybridize to a chromosomal rearrangement of a cell line.

Selden et al. shows in the abstract and figure 5 use of in situ hybridization to analyze an altered Philadelphia chromosome in cell line K562. Selden et al. uses an ABL probe as part of their analysis.

It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to make probes for analyzing ABL-BCR junctions as shown in Bartram et al. in view of Hopman et al. in view of Hariharan et al. in view of Shtivelman et al. in view of Lawrence et al. as applied to claims 127, 128, 130-134, 136, 139-141, 148, and 149 above that would detect Philadelphia chromosomes in a cell line because Selden et al. shows that cell lines may be used for in situ hybridization to study chromosomal rearrangements in Philadelphia chromosomes.

12. Claims 127, 128, 148, 151, 152, and 154 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bartram et al. in view of Hopman et al. in view of Hariharan et al. in view of

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Shtivelman et al. in view of Lawrence et al. as applied to claims 127, 128, 130-134, 136, 139-141, 148, and 149 above, and further in view of Lau et al. (Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA Vol. 80, pages 5225-5229 (1983)) as evidenced by Westbrook (U.S. Patent No. 6,576,421).

The claimed subject matter is a set of two probes with distinguishable labels, one of which hybridizes to an ABL side of a chromosome translocation comprising a fusion of ABL and BCR genes, with the other probe hybridizing to the BCR side of the fusion of ABL and BCR genes. In some embodiments the ABL probe is c-hu-ABL.

Bartram et al. in view of Hopman et al. in view of Hariharan et al. in view of Shtivelman et al. in view of Lawrence et al. as applied to claims 127, 128, 130-134, 136, 139-141, 148, and 149 above do not show an ABL probe that is c-hu-ABL.

Lau et al. shows in the abstract and throughout cosmid vectors useful for the isolation of gene sequences. Lau et al. shows on page 5229 that their cosmids have the advantage of serving as vectors for genomic library preparation and also as expression vectors for transfer into mammalian cells, and allowing for subsequent isolation and packaging of the vectors.

Westbrook defines the vector portion of the c-H-abl probe in column 16 by stating that the cosmid vectors of Lau et al. were used to prepare the c-H-abl probe vector.

It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use any desired portion of the ABL gene sequence that would hybridize to a Philadelphia chromosome by inserting the desired ABL fragment as shown in Shtivelman et al. into a cosmid vector of Lau et al. because such a probe would allow for detection of ABL

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sequences in Philadelphia chromosomes and because Lau et al. shows that their cosmid vectors are useful for cloning gene sequences.

13. Claims 127, 128, 148, 150, 153, and 155 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bartram et al. in view of Hopman et al. in view of Hariharan et al. in view of Shtivelman et al. in view of Lawrence et al. as applied to claims 127, 128, 130-134, 136, 139-141, 148, and 149 above, and further in view of Frischauf et al. (Journal of Molecular Biology Vol. 170, pages 827-842 (1983)) as evidenced by Westbrook (U.S. Patent No. 6,576,421).

The claimed subject matter is a set of two probes with distinguishable labels, one of which hybridizes to an ABL side of a chromosome translocation comprising a fusion of ABL and BCR genes, with the other probe hybridizing to the BCR side of the fusion of ABL and BCR genes. In some embodiments the BCR probe is PEM12.

Bartram et al. in view of Hopman et al. in view of Hariharan et al. in view of Shtivelman et al. in view of Lawrence et al. as applied to claims 127, 128, 130-134, 136, 139-141, 148, and 149 above do not show a BCR probe that is PEM12.

Frischauf et al. shows in the abstract and figure 1 the lambda bacteriophage EMBL3. Frischauf et al. show that EMBL3 is useful for cloning genomic sequences by virtue of the polylinker sequences in the EMBL3 vector that allows for direct insertion of a variety of digested genomic DNA (see the abstract and Figure 1).

Westbrook defines the vector portion of the PEM12 probe in column 16 by stating that the EMBL3 vector was used to prepare the PEM12 probe vector.

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It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use any desired portion of the BCR gene sequence that would hybridize to a Philadelphia chromosome by inserting the desired BCR fragment as shown in Hariharan et al. et al. into an EMBL3 vector of Frischauf et al. because such a probe would allow for detection of BCR sequences in Philadelphia chromosomes and because Frischauf et al. shows that their lambda vectors are useful for cloning gene sequences.

Double Patenting

14. Applicant is advised that should claim 127 be found allowable, claims 128 and 148 will be objected to under 37 CFR 1.75 as being a substantial duplicate thereof. When two claims in an application are duplicates or else are so close in content that they both cover the same thing, despite a slight difference in wording, it is proper after allowing one claim to object to the other as being a substantial duplicate of the allowed claim. See MPEP § 706.03(k).

15. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the “right to exclude” granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. A nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting rejection is appropriate where the conflicting claims are not identical, but at least one examined application claim is not patentably distinct from the reference claim(s) because the examined application claim is either anticipated by, or would have been obvious over, the reference claim(s). See, e.g., *In re Berg*, 140 F.3d 1428, 46 USPQ2d 1226 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225

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USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) or 1.321(d) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent either is shown to be commonly owned with this application, or claims an invention made as a result of activities undertaken within the scope of a joint research agreement.

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

16. Claims 127, 128, 130, 131, and 148 are rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 3 and 11 of U.S. Patent No. 6,280,929. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because the claimed subject matter of U.S. Patent No. 6,280,929 is a method of using the probes of the instant claims further limited to be a species of probe that is at least 40 kb in length and it would be obvious to make the probes required by the method of using the probes.

17. Claims 127, 128, 130, 131, and 148 are provisionally rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 23, 24, 38, 72, 74, 118, 122, and 123 of copending Application No. 10/608,092. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because the differences

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between the probes of the instant claims and the sum of the limitations of the probes claimed in copending Application No. 10/608,092 are minor.

This is a provisional obviousness-type double patenting rejection because the conflicting claims have not in fact been patented.

18. Claims 127, 128, 130-134, 136-142, 146-148, and 150-155 are rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 3, 7, 8, 10-16, 19, 21, 22, 24, and 26-36 of U.S. Patent No. 6,576,421. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because the claimed subject matter of U.S. Patent No. 6,576,421 is a method of using the probes of the instant claims further limited to using three probes and it would be obvious to make the probes required by the method of using the probes.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to John S. Brusca whose telephone number is 571 272-0714. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Marjorie A. Moran can be reached on 571-272-0720. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/John S. Brusca/

Primary Examiner, Art Unit

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jsb